beedis has already been taken up by the Government with the US authorities.

Closure of SSIS

*169. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the Small Scale Industries closed during the last three years;

(b) the number of workers rendered jobless as a result thereof;

(c) the money of the banks and other financial institutions blocked as a result thereof; and

(d) whether Government have any plan to assist this sector; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) The information on closed units is not maintained centrally. However, the Reserve Bank of the India (RBI) compiles data on sick SSIs financed by scheduled commercial banks. As per the data compiled by the RBI, the number of sick SSI units at the end of March 1999, March 2000 and March 2001 was 306221, 304235 and 249630, respectively. The outstanding bank credit in these units at the end of March 1999, March 2000 and March 2001 was Rs. 4313.48 crorcs, Rs. 4608.43 crorcs and Rs. 4505.54 crorcs, respectively.

(d) The Government is fully seized of the incidence of industrial sickness among SSI units and has taken various measures to facilitate timely identification and rehabilitation of potentially viable sick units, which *inter-alia* include institutional mechanism in the form of State-level Inter-Institutional Committees (SLIICs), Special Rehabilitation Cells in banks and State Financial Institutions, and elaborate guidelines issued by the RBI for extending rehabilitation assistance to eligible units. Based on the recommendations of the Working Group constituted under the Chairmanship of Shri S.S. Kohli, the then Chairman of Indian Banks' Association, the "RBI has drawn up revised guidelines for rehabilitation of sick SSI units, which include *inter-alia* change in the definition of sick SSI units, norms for

deciding on their viability, etc. The RBI has circulated the revised guidelines on 16th January, 2002 to all the banks for implementation.

Laying of Telephone Cables

†*170. SHRI R.N. ARYA:
SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have prescribed the required depth with regard to laying of telephone cables;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that while laying the telephone cables in district Mainpuri during the last three years, the aforesaid policy has not been adhered to and some of the officers have made the payment in accordance with the prescribed policy and some complaints have also been received in this regard;

(d) if so, the details of the contractors, telephone cable and digging done during the last three years; and

(c) what action has been taken on these complaints so received?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The prescribed depth for laying of underground cable is one metre.

(c) and (d) In Mainpuri SSA, the policy in respect of depth has been followed. However, cases of excess payment to contractors have come to notice on account of misclassification of the nature of surfaces under which the cables were laid. The details of the contractors and the cable laid arc given in the statement. (See below)

(c) Disciplinary action against 15 officers, including suspension of

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.